

RELIGION---Is It Losing?

By the Rev. Dr. B. F. De Costa.

A WEEK ago to-day the Rev. Dr. De Costa said, in his sermon, that sectarianism had resulted in harming Christianity. His utterances aroused considerable comment among clergy of all denominations, and many letters were printed in the Journal during the week in answer to his arguments. Dr. De Costa herewith repeats his assertion and answers his critics.

Twenty Million Christians.

I AM glad to avail myself of the invitation that the Journal so courteously affords to address the vast audience presented in my own words, especially in these days of haste, when one, through interpreters, is often misunderstood. You invite me to say just how the ecclesiastical and theological situation appears to me. We stand on the eve of great events, destined to affect all moral and spiritual as well as industrial interests; yet there never was a time when the prospect, as I view it, was invested with a truer promise. I am an optimist. I hold that the present age is the grandest the world has ever seen, and that in our country there are more good Christians than ever before, yet I must be so frank as to say that sectarianism has failed to reach the masses, and that it must repent and be converted or turn its face to the wall and die.

Religion Not Dying Out.

Still no thoughtful person should think that religion is dying, or likely to die. One might as well say that gravitation is dying. Religion is immortal. It can never die. The old Greek dramatist, in splendid diction, declared that religion could not die with man. Religion is one of the necessities of our nature, and has been found so in every age. There is no trouble, however, in the fact that many do not distinguish between religion and Christianity. The religious sentiment is common to both Christian and pagan. It may do much or nothing for a man. It may do harm. It needs to be regulated and governed by something exterior, and the governing thing is found in Christianity, which is a system shaping true belief and just action. I have had daily pouring in upon me of late letters written by readers of the Journal, whose name appears to be legion; but there is much confusion of thought; some saying that religion is dying and ought to die, and others taking the just ground that religion is a necessity of our nature and cannot die. Again, one says that Christianity is dying, and another that it is the church, the creed, that is dying, and that "Christianity can never die." They do not seem to realize the difference between Christianity and religion. Some

identify religion with a creed; others tell us that religion is not a creed. The latter are right. The religious does not, of necessity, accept a creed. Religion is a comparatively low faculty, and may exist and have existed without creed, Christianity or even decency and morality.

The number of those in this country who profess Christianity is partially indicated by the census, which gives about twenty millions out of seventy as members of religious organizations; but we must remember that all religious bodies are not Christian, many being mere secularists, sceptics and sceptics, while a large proportion of the nominal Christians do nothing and reflect no credit. Beyond question, we have to-day in this country about fifty millions who are indifferent to Christianity or reject it. I have been represented as saying that the different denominations are falling in numbers, but on this point I have said nothing. I have simply pointed out the fact that in little more than a single century the number of the unchurched has increased from somewhat over one million to fifty millions. In the face of this fact let men rejoice for the petty gains which their figures, with the aid of some juggling, show, if they can. While they have been building up a denomination the masses have been going down to the grave without that Christian hope and faith which they themselves tell us is essential.

My aim has been to deal with the evil spirit of sectarianism, which is quite as dangerous as scepticism. There is a fatal infidelity only equalled by a fatal fidelity, characteristic of types of mind shaped under the disintegrating principle involved in the two hundred sects that have grown out of the reformations launched by Luther and Cranmer. The defence of these warring organizations is immoral. A hundred years of these sects has resulted in vast damage to Christianity, and, consequently, to virtue; and, notwithstanding the vast and growing number of pure men and women in the United States, the stretch of immorality goes up in all quarters of the land. It is perfectly well known that in New York alone some fifty thousand women gain a living in part or whole by trading in the sanctities of womanhood, supported by some two hundred thousand male debauchees. At the same time the courts reek with divorce, the principle of which was introduced at the reformation by Cranmer, supported by the act of Luther in divorcing bigamy, while the whole mass of putrefaction was swollen by such men as Swedenborg, who added to other indulgences the right to commit fornication. It is about time to stop and fix a little re-

sponsibility before we plunge into the next century. Who is answerable before God for this state of things?

What is to be said about the growth of the various religious bodies? Though the unchurched portion of the people increases with alarming speed, we must nevertheless recognize that the religiousists grow likewise. The fact is that while the unchurched grow by thousands the unchurched grow by millions. I cannot here speak in detail, though the Episcopal Church reports 40,000 persons added by confirmation last year, giving the present number 664,083 as the result of about, say, two hundred years. If the "dead wood" had been faithfully thrown out little increase in the sum total might have appeared. In fact, no proper means have been employed to secure an increase. The animus of the church is far from popular, as shown by the fact that while the Baptists, with \$32,300,000 of church property, provide seats for 11,500,000 persons, the Episcopal Church, with \$38,335,000, seats only 1,350,000. "Oh, the Baptists, you know, look after the blacks," said one in reply to the statement. How fast the Baptists increase I cannot say, but it will be some time before any sect can wipe out the margin of the unchurched fifty millions. I see by the Advocate that the Methodists have been debating why their interests have fallen off, the growth of 1894 being 157,536, while it steadily decreased until last year it went down to 19,728.

A Remarkable Address.

One of the most remarkable things I have seen of late is the address of the moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of New York. With its exhibition of decay are particular but important lines that may well excite the apprehension not only of that denomination, but of all good citizens who are interested in the public welfare. No thoughtful man could read that address without a feeling of profound regret. Indeed, members of various denominations have visited me, knowing that had long been observing that some denominations seemed to be failing in New York to reach the masses, while the Episcopalians were credited with advance. I hope that, all things taken fairly together, we have to ask why some denominations seemed to be failing in great cities, and especially failing with the masses in New York, while Episcopalians were credited with advance. But what kind of an advance? While new parishes have been formed, thirty have died since 1845. Sixteen have died or removed below Fourteenth street, though population has increased enormously; while in the same space of time, in the same district, the

Roman Catholics have gained sixteen strong parishes. When we talk about gains we must be fair, even though sectarianism appreciates nothing but its own interests. It is idle to deny the attitude that has been taken all along. There is not a Protestant paper in the land of any consequence that has not mourned "the failure to reach the masses" and offered some remedy to meet the case. It is only when the fact is brought in a special way before the public and sectarianism assigned as the cause of failure that there is an attempt to cover up the fact. It is too late to attempt to sponge out the despairing phrases indelibly written upon the memory of clerical clubs or to send missionaries to Porto Rico or Manila. Take care of the millions at home, who have been and still are going down to "undiscovered" graves. The "masses" stand apathetic or wearing a quizzical or hostile expression, and in New York the last efforts of so eminent a revivalist and good man as Mr. Moody proved a confessed failure in reaching and saving the "unconverted." Denominationalism, indeed, no more than evangelism can do the work. The "masses" were long ago sick of sectarianism. They recognize that the sects have little or no love for one another; that they do not even agree among themselves respecting the essentials of the Christian religion. Sectarianism has no programme to offer and is very much befogged itself about the requirements of the hour.

Hopeful and Cheerful.

Still, whatever may be the condition of religiousists, I do not despair. I have never felt more hopeful or cheerful in my life than to-day. Why? Because I believe in Christianity. I believe it is true, enduring, immortal. Like the religious sentiment itself, it can never die. I believe in the "Holy Catholic Church." I believe that Jesus Christ founded the Church, and that, in spite of blatant infidelity and sectarian fidelity, the gates of hell will never prevail against it. A strong tower is our God. Christianity being true, being the only religious system that can meet the moral, intellectual and spiritual needs of man, it forms an impenetrable castle, an unassailable and unassailable fortress, whose walls can never fall. It simply remains for the denominations, if they desire to save the millions for Christ and God, to lay aside sectarianism and take up a position, as one vast body, with one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism standing inside the lines of a genuine Christianity, as taught by catholic antiquity, and to do this before business men rise up, as they surely will at last, and refuse to pay their useless and ruinous expenses.

In conclusion, to good friends who may be preparing stripes, let me say, not "Come into the Episcopal ark," but, rather, "Let us drop pessimism, decline to talk about the 'impossible,' let a supreme effort be made to unite all friends of Christianity in one undivided grand apostolic American church; let us all thus get into the ark of the Church Catholic, into the ark of God, and, with united voice, invite the unchurched millions to come in and be saved."

R. F. DE COSTA,
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The New Cult--SCIENCE.

By Cyrus W. Edson, M. D.

A NEW cult has been started in England which believes in the Darwinian idea of the survival of the fittest in its most literal sense, holding that hospitals should be done away with, and, in short, everything that tends to preserve the lives and health of those who are feeble either mentally or bodily should be abolished.

I hardly know whether or not this matter should be considered seriously. I understand that the believers in this new plan take themselves seriously, that they may find followers here, and that they contemplate doing away with schools on the principle that people who are by nature better fitted to fight the battle of life will educate themselves in any case. By this plan they contend that those who are feeble, mentally or bodily, will die off, and that a virile race of people will be evolved of a high order of intelligence, absolutely strong and healthy and fitted in every way to undertake life's battles.

The Darwinian Aspect.

It seems incredible that thinking men, who are well enough educated to be conversant with the laws of the survival of the fittest, should take so superficial a view of the subject as to advocate such measures as the abolition of hospitals, schools and physicians. While I am a believer, as I think the majority of medical men are, in the Darwinian theory, yet to apply it to the human race in such a way as this seems insane. A superficial observer at first thought, however, might see considerable force in the argument that the school forces the weak intellect, just as a household forces a plant that would only be able to live within a hot-house environment and that would wither and die when exposed to the elements outside.

The Fallacy of It.

It is not necessary to show the fallacy of such an argument. A proposition to abolish hospitals and the practice of medicine is only one step short of advocating the destruction of our weaker fellow beings by forcible means. It seems to me that it would be far more humane to let the weaklings by electrocution or some other painless method than to stand by idly and see them die through neglect.

This, of course, is admitting, for argument's sake, that it would be a good thing for the race to abolish the weaker ones in order that the stronger should predominate. But there is another and far more cogent objection to the plan of this cult. The human race cannot be considered on the same plane with animals with regard to the Darwinian theory. We are living under artificial conditions, the outcome of our modern civilization. If for one week the members of the medical profession were

to stop their fight against disease the result would be disastrous to the human race. Living as we do, herded together in cities, where every one is liable to breathe contaminated air, the disease that affects the poor weakling who lives in the tenement districts, if unchecked or uncurbed, will become so malignant that it will spread to the dwellings of the rich and will attack those who are living amid surroundings which are supposed safeguards against infectious diseases. An example of this occurred a few years ago in the epidemic of influenza, which, starting in Russia among famine-stricken peasants, killed strong men in the best parts of New York City, where every condition existed which could protect them and make their surroundings healthy. This disease spread with such rapidity and its visitations were so universal that the mansions of the rich appeared no more free from its visitations than the hovels of the poor. This was a case in which the doing away with physicians would have been a world-wide disaster.

Another Argument.

Again, the disciples of this new cult must remember that under the Darwinian theory of evolution, which they make the basis of their extraordinary plan, the doing away with individual types means degeneration. It is known that it is the individuals of any species possessing natural qualifications which give them an advantage over their fellows that leads to higher varieties of organic life, and that with a sameness and equality of type there is a tendency toward reversion. Those who breed dogs and horses, for instance, know that a breed of horses or dogs which has had the same characteristics for a long time is improved by crossing it with other breeds. In the cultivation of flowers the experienced and scientific gardener is always on the lookout for individual plants and flowers of richer hues and more beautiful form than the others and fertilizes the other plants with them. This goes on until he has evolved new and beautiful plants and flowers of a bewildering variety and gorgeous hues. Take the chrysanthemum, for instance, which in its original state was a very plain flower and doubtless remained so for countless centuries, but by using the individuals and other plants with them a variety was produced which is a triumph of modern gardening. Under the plan of the new cult, supposing that it was in operation for a century, there would be no variety in the human race, and it has been often shown, as I said before, that when there is an absence of individual types degeneration or reversion will result.

But even if this were not so, the battle

of life among civilized men takes a different form from the battle of life among animals, or savages, or plants, or flowers. Civilized man must work out his own salvation in his own way, and, above all, without violating any of the laws which culture, intelligence and increasing refinement have built around society. We are reaching higher and higher from an intellectual point of view, and it is most important that our development should be in the direction of lofty intellectual attainment. Nothing is commoner than to see a noble and brilliant intellect enshrined in a puny, weak body. What a loss to mankind it would be if the possessor of this intellect had been left to die of neglect in accordance with the ruthless teachings of the new cult! Let us suppose that the proposition of these fanatics has been in operation from the time of Aesop the dwarf to the time of John Randolph of Roanoke. What would the world not lose through the death of the deformed poet Pope, the dyspeptic Carlyle, the fragile Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, whose great soul occupied men an insignificant tabernacle, and a host of others that space and time would prevent me from enumerating?

Another Argument.

Another argument occurs to me. Who shall judge in any specific case, going by the stern law of the survival of the fittest, that it is not worth while very often to preserve and save the lives and health of delicate children? How often do we see our efforts to save what seems to be at first a puny, miserable life rewarded by development from weakly conditions into strong vigorous manhood or womanhood? In the twenty years in which I have practised medicine, numerous instances come to my memory of weakly children who have become strong and even athletic men and women. No one can tell the future of the puniest baby after it passes through all the ills that childhood is subject to and reaches manhood or womanhood. The human frame is a wondrous machine, so delicate in its organism and so complex in its nature that it is presumptuous in any man, however learned he may be, to predict what the most fragile baby may become in after life, either mentally or physically. But I do not think that we need seriously trouble ourselves about the fanatics who advance such inhuman theories as the followers of the new cult believe or profess to believe. They will find few followers among those who take the problems of life seriously and honestly. They will not cause the wheel of progress to deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from its natural path or alter or in any way affect the tide of ever advancing civilization.

PARKHURST'S GREAT DIFFICULTY TO GET AT TEDDY.

SOME SIGNIFICANT CONVERSATIONS OVER THE WIRE.

THE telephone girl at the Fifth Avenue Hotel branch, with the receiver fastened to her ears by steel bands about her golden hair, alternately reads "Madcap Madeline, the Millionaire's Ward," and listens to conversations over the wire. In the course of an interesting afternoon she reads and hears about as follows:



(Reads.)—She clutched her hands to her heaving bosom as the full import of the cruel lines came to her. Tears welled up from the depths of her blue—

(Hears.)—Hello, is that you, Tim? This is Abe. What? Yes, Abe Gruber. Say, that vest you had on last night was a peach; sure, I liked it. Say, Tim, I was kind of surprised at Lou. I didn't think he made his front strong enough. What's that? Lou knows his business? Well, you bet he does. Now, about that man—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—eyes, but were speedily quenched by the fire that flashed—

(Hears.)—Hello, is that Mr. Roosevelt? This is Dr. Parkhurst. Theodore, I would like to know—Don't cut me off like that, please. Is that Mr. Roosevelt? Hello, hello—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—from them. "False Lionel," she cried, "false, cruel Lionel, to so deceive a trusting girl. But the day will come—"

(Hears.)—S-s-t. Don't talk so loud. Where are you? Is the door of the booth closed? Yes. What did he say? Well, you just tell him that I said—say that Mr. Platt said—that he would have to do it. Make it just that way, that he would have to do it. See him right away, now, and don't forget to make it strong. I just saw Odell and he tells me—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—when you will rue it. It will not do to think, Lionel Bierhausen, that you can trifle with me because I am young and innocent. Hell hath no fury like a woman—

(Hears.)—Hello! Tell Mr. Roosevelt that Dr. Parkhurst must speak to him; must, do you hear? Yes, I'll hold the wire—what, not there? Why, I was speaking to him not over a minute ago. I protest—

(Reads.)—second. With this the fair girl cast herself on a couch and wept bitterly.

(Hears.)—Hello, is that you, Tom? Say, Dr. Parkhurst has been calling me up all afternoon. He says he wants to know why I didn't answer his letter. I don't know what to say. Say nothing? Now, see here, I think I ought to say something. This policy of silence is entirely foreign to my well grounded ideas of political work. I cannot afford to allow—what's that? Come to see me? No—I'll say what I have to say right now—hello, are you there, Mr. Platt? Who cuts us off, Central? Give me that connection again, I say. What do you mean by—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—But, how fared it with Lionel Bierhausen all this time? False as his heart was he had really loved the girl, if such a man as he can be said to have loved anybody, and it cost him

a pang to cast her off when he found that her fortune was all invested in Keely motor stock.

(Hears.)—Hello, is that you, Ed? Yes, this is me, Gibbs. Say, Ed, what did that mean that Teddy spied to you about arcades and amusements? Do you think he meant anything personal? I wouldn't stand for it if he did. It's all right? Well then, it's all right, all right, but I believe in the English language without any trimmings on it. That's the way I talk. Now, what I wanted to see you about was—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—Fortune hunter that he was, he wavered between writing the letter that had caused the trusting, simple Madeline so much agony and sharing his life with hers, for he knew full well that she had not known of his treachery. "Well," he mused, as his valet dressed him for Lady—

(Hears.)—Hello! Is this Mr. Roosevelt? Theodore, I have been seeking—Yes, this is Dr.—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—Getterelli's ball, "falut heart ne'er won fair lady, and even if I am compelled to give up the lovely Madeline because of her lack of wealth, there is still Maggie Eisenblatt, the welter-worst man's daughter. She has wealth which will make up for her lack of beauty."

(Hears.)—Tell Mr. McCullough I want to speak to him. Hello, Mac, say, I just received a visit from Bill the Brute and he tells me you refused him a job as a deputy. Got around too late? I know he did; he only came out of Sing Sing yesterday. You wouldn't appoint him anyhow? Sent him up, did you? Well, he'll be up there in about fifteen minutes and you swear him in. All right. Good-by.

until Kerens comes to town. I guess that would be a good idea. Now, remember, that we need all you can spare here, Mark. This is no cinch. Teddy's unfortunate propensity for making affidavits—what's that? To b—l with the affidavit? Well, that might do in Ohio, but it don't do here. I've been here a few years now, Mark. Money goes here. Yes, I'll see you to-night. So long—hello; say, Mark, don't overlook that party I spoke to you about last night. Hit him hard, away up. He don't think much of me, but play the country to him, see? Tell him that we are in danger all over the United States. That's all, I guess. So long.

(Reads.)—"Of course you did," said Reginald Smith, calmly. "You tried to murder me by

throwing me off the Brooklyn Bridge with 4,000 pounds of butter cakes tied to each foot. But I fooled you, villain! When I struck the water the butter cakes exploded and blew me clear to Canarsie. I landed on a high, dry, building lot, swum out, and here I am for my revenge."

(Hears.)—Yes, this is Counsellor Nolan. Now, Mr. Croker, I think you might give Grady another chance. Sure, the poor man is unfortunate! that way. I have no axe to grind, Mr. Croker, but I'd—Bony, are you? Well, I'll drop around and see you to-night. You won't be there? Well, I'll see you some other—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—Lionel Bierhausen trembled. "Yes," continued Reginald Smith, "for my revenge, not so much for what you have done to me as for your cruelty to Madeline. I have loved her, but have another my love because I am poor. I should have warned her."

(Hears.)—I wish you would tell Mr. Roosevelt that Dr. Parkhurst insists—b-z-z-z—

(Reads.)—"Curse you," hissed Lionel Bierhausen, drawing a revolver from his pocket. Reginald Smith saw the action, but too late, for even as he sprang at his assailant the weapon was discharged and he fell to the sidewalk.

(Hears.)—Hello, Elihu. You think they will? I thought so, too. Of course, if they try to keep Teddy's name off the ticket we've got to try to get it on. Hill is a fox proposition, though. Well, you know just what to do, Elihu. You just skip right up there and throw sand in their eyes. Better take Joe along, too. Teddy's a little worried about that. If they'd keep his name off the ticket and keep that tax money, too, it would break his heart. Just keep your eye on that, Elihu. We must all stand together, you know. Good-by.

(Reads.)—Madeline felt that she must go out. The heat of the house was killing her. Hastily throwing a mackintosh over her satin morning dress, she went out into the chill evening air. She walked she knew not where, unconscious of the number of men who were giving her the eye. Suddenly, as she turned into a quiet street, she came upon the prostrate body of a man.

(Hears.)—Hello, is this President Low? This is Odell; Chairman Odell, you know. Yes, Mr. Platt asked me, Mr. Low, if you wouldn't be so kind as to arrange to make a few speeches for Mr.

terence an' Honorar, an' Robert Immitt an' all me little Snakes an' rustle out West in th' trucks, he says, 'far from th' bones in me ancestors,' he says, 'an' beyond th' water-pipe extensor, he says, 'Because,' says I, 'I am th' walk in dilgrate iv white civilization,' I says, 'I'm jist as civilized as you,' says Snakes. 'I wear pants,' he says, 'an' a plug hat,' he says, 'Ye might wear th' pairs,' says I, 'an' all at wanst,' I says, 'an' ye'd still-be a savage,' says I, 'an' I'd be civilized,' I says, 'if I hadn't on so much as a bangle bracelet,' I says, 'So get out,' says I, 'fr th' plannny movers is outside ready to go to wurruk,' I says.

"Well, Snakes he fires a shove lid at me an' I go down to th' polis station an' says I, 'Loot,' I says, 'there's a drunken Indyan not voting up near th' mills an' he's carryin' on outrageous an' well wot me hang my pitchers on his wall,' says I, 'Vile savage,' says th' Loot, 'I'll tache him to rapslyt th' rules iv civilization,' he says, 'An' he takes out a wagon load an' goes after Snakes.

"Well, me frind Snakes gives him battie, 'an' knowin' th' premises well he's able to put up a gr-rreat fight, but after a while they rip him away an' have him in th' patrol wagon with a man settin' on his head. An' this he's put under bonds to kape the pace, an' they slid him out West. 'Fr why should I take Mary Ann, an' I've th' trucks an' I move into th' house an'

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"Well, Snakes he fires a shove lid at me an' I go down to th' polis station an' says I, 'Loot,' I says, 'there's a drunken Indyan not voting up near th' mills an' he's carryin' on outrageous an' well wot me hang my pitchers on his wall,' says I, 'Vile savage,' says th' Loot, 'I'll tache him to rapslyt th' rules iv civilization,' he says, 'An' he takes out a wagon load an' goes after Snakes.

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